

Regional Council of Rural Counties Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Process 1999

The Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) represents twenty seven of the States 58 Counties. Our member Counties, cover approximately 40% of the states total land base. Aside from being home to Mount Shasta, Lake Tahoe and Yosemite our counties, are also home to dozens of privately owned hydroelectric reservoirs and powerhouses. These projects, built from thirty to seventy years ago, are operated under authority of the Federal Power Act as administered by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. In addition, many of these projects hold special permits from the United States Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service and the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management which allow them access, to federal reservations and condition their use of the land.

These projects not only significant amounts of electrical energy consumed in the state, but also hold the rights to significant water and the key to key recreational areas. Nearly all of these projects are currently being proposed for transfer to an unregulated (by the California Public Utilities Commission) subsidiary of Pacific Gas and Electric. Our Counties, being at the epicenter of this proposal, have more at stake in these projects than anyone else in the State of California. Properly re-operated these projects could provide a broad spectrum of opportunities to local and statewide water supplies as well as the environment.

RCRC, on behalf of its membership counties, will be urging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the other federal agencies with permitting or regulatory authority, to keep our organization well informed of any proposed actions for these projects, any negotiations regarding these projects, and any correspondence or meetings regarding these projects. We request that your office assist us in achieving proper recognition and treatment by those agencies, as well as "a seat at the table" in meaningful dialogue.

1.29.99